



Black Falcon

Photo: Bill Moorhead



Juvenile Grey Falcon

Photo: Pete Morris (Birdquest)



Red Goshawk

Photo: W.S. (Bill) Clark

**SPECIAL ISSUE FEATURING THREE RARE AUSTRALIAN RAPTORS:
Black Falcon *Falco subniger*, Grey Falcon *Falco hypoleucos*
and Red Goshawk *Erythrotriorchis radiatus***

PREAMBLE

This special issue of *Corella* features Australia's rare raptors. It is the third in a series, which has previously featured the Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Corella* 31(2)) and the White-bellied Sea-Eagle (*Corella* 33(3)).

I commend Stephen Debus, yet again, on his foresight in the collection of these papers on our rare raptors and hope that the data they contain will contribute to the conservation of these majestic birds. I also wish to thank those who have contributed photographs for this issue.

Editor

The papers published herein are a collation of studies and other previously unpublished knowledge on some of our rarest or least-known endemic raptors: the Red Goshawk, Grey Falcon and Black Falcon. True, they focus on the charismatic, top-order bird hunters, but there are now good ecological reasons for this focus (e.g. Sergio *et al.* 2006, 2008, *J. Applied Ecology* **43**: 1049–1055; **45**: 992–999).

The Red Goshawk study is a companion paper to one on the bird's biology (Czechura *et al.* 2009, *Australian Field Ornithology* **26**: 148–156). The Grey Falcon papers present the key results of a study in the Pilbara (Sutton), data on diet and fledgling productivity in South Australia (Falkenberg), and a critical analysis of morphometrics (Schoenjahn), complementing one on field identification (Schoenjahn 2010, *Australian Field Ornithology* **27**: 49–58). The last is necessary, because of the many erroneous records for near-coastal south-eastern Australia, in state wildlife atlas schemes (e.g. clusters on the rainforested escarpment of the Great Divide in NSW: obviously misidentified Grey Goshawks). Finally, a paper on the Black Falcon — Australia's answer to the fabled Saker — presents some study findings, and collates database information from museums and the ABBBS. Collectively, these papers help to correct the knowledge deficit on these species.

It is extraordinary that the Black Falcon has not received research attention comparable to that lavished on the Peregrine. Many questions on our endemic raptors remain. For instance, if the Square-tailed Kite and Black-breasted Buzzard are now known to be *pernines*, what is the (non-*Accipiter*) Red Goshawk? Where does the Grey Falcon fit in *Falco*? Behavioural and vocal data, and feathers collected for DNA analysis, could help to answer these questions.

Dr Stephen Debus



Adult female Red Goshawk in nest tree, Cape York Peninsula (see text pages 3–10), May 2008.

Photo: John Courtney